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Housekeepers' Chat

Wed., Jan. 4/28

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "January White Sales." Information about fabrics from Ruth O'Brien, Head, Textiles and Clothing Division, Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A. Menu and recipe also from Bureau.

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Early yesterday morning -- I mean very early -- long before respectable people even think of getting up, I awoke with the thought that my telephone had been ringing for several minutes. I hurried downstairs. A cheerful voice greeted me. As you may have guessed, it was my Next-Door Neighbor.

"Alas for human frailty," said she, "I thought one of your New Year resolutions was to rise with the lark, and get half a day's work done before breakfast. Don't you know that the early bird gets the worm, Aunt Sammy?"

"Sure," I said, "but I didn't want a worm, this morning. I'd rather sleep. What's the occasion for this telephone call, anyway?"

"A dinner invitation!" exclaimed my Neighbor. "I'm spending the day in town, but I want you to come over and have dinner with me tonight. Will you come?"

"Yes," I said, "if you will have something very simple. I'm tired of holiday fare."

"Very well," said my Neighbor, "I'll have Onion Soup."

And that is what she had. Onion Soup, Celery and Olives, and Pumpkin Pie. While we ate dinner, my Neighbor told me all about her trip to town. It seems she had been reading so many advertisements, of January white sales, that she simply could not resist going to town.

"It was this way, Aunt Sammy," she told me. "I hadn't bought a towel, or a table cloth, for ages. So I decided to take part of my Christmas money, and invest it in table linen and towels. It seemed to me that every newspaper I read offered bigger and better bargains. Really, I was almost distracted with all the intriguing bargains. You see, Aunt Sammy, in spite of all the good advice you give us, we women don't know nearly enough, about how to choose good fabrics, even when they are as simple as toweling and table cloths. In fact, I've come to believe that we need some kind of a scheme whereby such common fabrics as toweling and table cloths could be graded, the way my father grades his potatoes. Why couldn't manufacturers put labels on different qualities of the common fabrics, so we'd know which ones wear best, second best, and so on?"



1/4/28

Then, if we could afford only the second best, we'd know what to expect from it, in the way of wearing qualities. Of course, such a scheme wouldn't work for all the novelty fabrics, but it certainly would work for material like toweling, or sheeting.

"This morning I went down to my favorite department store, and Mr. O'Neal showed me three or four different kinds of towels. I couldn't tell them apart, and yet they were all priced differently. I told him I wanted to get my money's worth and would he please give me a few pointers on Turkish towels. Then he showed me how to stretch a little of the material, and see how the loops are fastened in. It seems that people who make such towels use very soft, loosely twisted, yarns, so they will absorb more water, which is of course what we want a towel to do. The loops are put in for this reason, too. But, if the loops are not fastened in, with a lot of good, strong yarns, which interlace with them, the loops pull right out. Then Mr. O'Neal told me that, I remembered those pink and blue wash cloths I bought last year, that I thought were such a bargain. Most of them have no loops left, and what were loops, are now strings, hanging out at all angles.

"Mr. O'Neal pulled the yarns of the toweling a little apart, so I could see that in some towels the yarns are made of a single strand, while others are double. He said double strands always wear better, especially if loosely twisted yarns are used. He also talked about selvages on towels. You know they do pull out sometimes. Selvages are made by putting extra warp yarns in the edge, and looping the filling yarns around them. But in some towels, only a few of the filling yarns come to the edge. It is easy to see that these towels soon fray out, at the edges.

"Mr. O'Neal said there are such things as seconds in towels, just as there are in all fabrics, some of which are good bargains, and some are not. It seems that all good mills have an inspection department, and every piece of material is carefully examined, before it is sent out. Sometimes there are pulled places, or unsightly knots, which make the goods a little less valuable. These are sold as seconds. If women are wise enough to choose these well, they can often get a good piece of material, for lots less money. But we must look at every inch carefully, and see just how badly damaged it is. The cloth is apt to wear through, if there are bad knots in the yarn, or the damaged places may come just where there will be the most wear on the towel. In such cases it may be better to pay a little more, and not run the risk of being disappointed. Some of the stores always label the seconds they sell, but occasionally they merely put them on bargain tables, and the buyer must be alert enough to look the fabric over carefully. Isn't that true, Aunt Sammy?"

"Quite true," I said. "You've learned a lot today. I must remember what you've told me, when I go shopping. By the way, where did you get the recipe for this gorgeous pumpkin pie?"

"Well, well!" exclaimed my Neighbor. "Is it possible! I made this pumpkin pie according to a recipe in a certain popular green cookbook. Ever hear of it, Aunt Sammy?"

"Yes indeed," I hastened to reply, and took a second helping of pumpkin pie.



As I said before, our dinner included Onion Soup, made according to the recipe on Page 10 of the Radio Cookbook, Celery and Olives, Oven Toasted Bread, and Pumpkin Pie.

The recipe for Pumpkin Pie is also in the Cookbook, but perhaps I'd better broadcast it, anyway. If you have a cookbook, you needn't listen. Nine ingredients, for Pumpkin, or Squash Pie.

- 1-1/2 cups cooked pumpkin or squash
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon mace
- 2 eggs, and
- 1 tablespoon butter

Check the nine ingredients while I repeat them: (Repeat)

Put all the ingredients, except the eggs and the butter, in the double boiler. Bring to the scalding point. Beat the eggs well; add them to the hot mixture. Stir until it starts to thicken. Add the butter. Line a pie pan with pastry and bake until light brown. Pour the hot filling into the baked crust. Bake the pie in a moderately hot oven until the filling sets.

And that, as somebody has remarked before, is that -- until tomorrow.

